



Get Healthy, Get Walking

Time was when health officials didn't need to remind people to walk—they just did it. People walked to work. They walked to church and to the grocery store. And they walked to school. Back then folks may not have realized all of the wonderful benefits of walking like we do today, but they walked.

When done correctly, walking provides many benefits, including:

- a reduced risk for breast cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke;
- a 50 percent reduction in the risk of premature death;
- a reduction in the symptoms of mild to moderate depression and anxiety;
- improved mental alertness, emotional stability and self-image;
- improved performance of the heart, lungs and muscles; and
- improved muscle tone and complexion.

Walking works. Walking just one mile in 20 minutes will burn roughly the same number of calories as:

- Swimming breast stroke for 9 minutes
- Running a mile in 10 minutes
- Bicycling for 16 minutes
- Playing baseball for 25 minutes

"From heart disease and stroke to better mental health and a longer life, the benefits of walking have been documented for decades," says Scott Williams, M.D., deputy director of the Utah Department of Health (UDOH). "Walking can be a key component of any health improvement program and is low impact, making it easier on your joints than other types of physical activity."

UTAHWALKS Campaign

With 55 percent of Americans still not getting enough physical activity, the Utah Departments

of Health (UDOH) and Transportation (UDOT) recently launched a joint campaign that urges Utahns to get out of the house and get walking. The UTAHWALKS campaign encourages Utahns to create healthy bodies and healthy communities through walking.

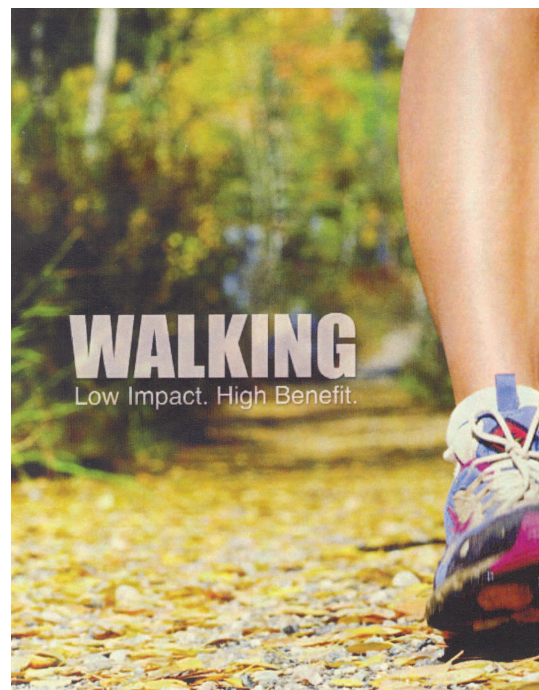
"One of the greatest things about walking is that you can do it just about anywhere," said John Njord, UDOT director. "As Utah's agency responsible for transportation, UDOT wants people to know about and use Utah's hundreds of trails, tracks and scenic pathways available to use for walking."

UTAHWALKS features an eight-page informational pamphlet that outlines the benefits of walking, provides walking instruction, and a sampling of the best places to walk. The pamphlet is available from UDOT, UDOH, local parks and recreation offices, and by calling the Check Your Health Hotline at 1-888-222-2542. The Web site, www.utahwalks.org, features maps of walking trails in Utah.

Walk to School

Walking to school in the 21st Century is a missed opportunity. Nationwide, only 10 percent of students walk to class. "We've become a nation of riders," says Jane Lambert of UDOH. That fact, combined with a reduction in school-related exercise opportunities, has contributed to the growing problem of obesity among American youth.

"Many school physical education classes and even recesses have been dropped due to shifting priorities," said Lambert. After school, kids are driven to events, a friend's house or the mall. Add in a daily dose of television and high-calorie snack foods, and it's no wonder the rate of childhood obesity has doubled over the past 20 years.



As part of a major effort to jumpstart kids on their way to health and fitness, people around the world hit the streets every October for International Walk to School Day. Held October 8 this year, it's an event that brings tens of thousands of Utahns out of their cars and onto the sidewalk. Launched in 1997, Walk to School Day promotes walking as the cheapest form of physical activity there is. Physical activity recommendations suggest children need a variety of activities each day, some intense, some relaxed, some informal and some structured. Walking to and from school is an ideal way to get that activity at no extra cost to the child or family.

And while you're getting fit, you can find new friends. Nearly nine out of ten parents who walk their children to school see it as an ideal way to meet people. Many say the school gate is a better place to meet new people than clubs, evening classes or the supermarket.

Whether it's on one of the hundreds of trails across the state, or in your local mall, Utahns should get out and walk. You don't need a gym membership or fitness equipment, just a little motivation and a comfortable pair of shoes. 